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THE  
THREE INEBRIATES.

A POEM.

*Samuel V. Linderly* BY  
S. V. LEECH, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK STATE TEMPERANCE SOCIETY. ✓



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1886.

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# CONSENSUS OF THE POEM.

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## CANTO I.

The Muse witnesses a drunkard's career—In a dream she sees Satan commissioning Intemperance as his chief agent for the ruin of souls—She hears an angel warning men against his wiles.

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## CANTO II.

A lady of wealth adopts an orphan babe—The death scene of the child's mother.

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## CANTO III.

The drunkenness of the child's foster-father—His wife's death—His vows of reformation—Again an inebriate.

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## CANTO IV.

The adopted child a student at college—The student at home eloquently pleading with his inebriate foster-father to reform—The sad address of response—The foster-father's suicide.

## CANTO V.

Ralph, the adopted son of the suicide, elected to the Senate—He first drinks at a banquet in his honor—  
The senator in a famous gambling house.

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## CANTO VI.

A "stag party" at the senator's residence—A widely known libertine at the banquet—His song—  
The weird dream of the senator.

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## CANTO VII.

The restaurant—The debauched son of the senator—  
—The senator's death—The widow's story—The son's ruin—  
The mother's prayer.

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## CANTO VIII.

The dying son's lamentation—The death scene—  
Prayer for prohibition.

# THE THREE INEBRIATES.

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## CANTO I.

I N memory's glass I see his shrouded form.  
His death-sealed eye once danced in boy-  
ish joy,  
And on his cheek the rose of beauty  
bloomed.

I saw him when with manly dignity  
He vowed to love and cherish one, whose  
heart

A sacred gift to him in trust was given.  
But soon upon the brilliant scene there fell  
A shadow that in blackness grew until  
Its darkness hid life's sunny scenery.  
He quaffed the cup—the bow that spanned  
life's sky  
With gaudy hues, dissolved in deep'ning  
clouds.

I saw his burial : his cofined form  
They laid within a drunkard's dreary grave.  
His children bending o'er him vainly called  
A father's name ; but the dull ear of Death  
Responded not to tones of love. His wife

In solitude of soul, his grave bedewed  
 With bitter tears, and crushed in heart re-  
 traced

Her weary, homeward steps.

'Twas midnight, and  
 The watchman's footfall on his lonely beat  
 With measured tread alone disturbed the  
 hush

Of Nature's deep repose. In dreamland  
 realms

I roamed in search of Truth's immortal fruit,  
 And, like to him who on the sea-girt isle  
 Received command the final scenes of Time  
 To paint for man ; so on my ear there fell  
 The mandate of a shining one : " The things  
 Unveiled before thine unsealed eye, the  
 same

To men unfold."

I stood in Hell's dark vaults  
 And saw the arch-satanic spirit stand  
 Upon a towering crag, enwrapped with fire.  
 Around him in dread council sat the chiefs  
 Of his demoniac hosts. In tones that shook  
 The mighty peaks about him piled, and  
 rocked

The sea of flame that 'neath him surged,  
 then spoke

The Demon King :

“Princes of Woe !

Long have ye pined to struggle with the God  
Who hurled you from yon blazing battle-  
ments,

And ages of pent wrath have well sufficed  
To train your souls for combat with the One  
Whose marshaled ranks resist my reign and  
rule.

In yon fair world that brightly burns upon  
God's arch, a queen star set in night's fair  
crown,

I struggle now with Him whose cross is  
reared

In far perspective—to redeem the prize  
I snatched in Eden from the Christos' hand.  
The soul of man in God's bright image found  
And wrecked by my great garden victory,  
I struggle to retain in hate of Him  
Whose justice forged the chains that bind  
us here.

“Murder ! thy mission know:  
Thy drapery shall crimson be ; in blood  
Thy vestments dyed. Where carnage reigns  
display  
Thy fearful power. In life's red current  
bathe  
Thy glittering sword, and revel where the  
slain

In silence sleep. Go in assassin form  
Where slumber deep is on the weary one  
With riches blest. While in Morphean  
arms

He dreams of bliss and talks with angel  
bands

Near hovering, approach his senseless form  
And deep within his heart the dagger  
plunge,

And send unwarned his soul before its  
Judge.

A 'code of honor,' falsely called, create,  
And teach that foul revenge is noble born;  
Forgiveness, coward's creed. In flame the  
mind

Until the turf shall drink most precious  
blood,

And pall in grief a Nation's lustrous sky.

“ 'Tis thine, Disease, to shatter man's  
Corporeal frame. The soul's great citadel  
Must conquered be by storming Nature's  
works

Around it thrown. Thy fever-heated hand  
Lay on the aching brow that it may burn  
In agony. Plant on the fair young cheek  
Consumption's rose, to bloom for death like  
the

Pale bud unfolding on the virgin snow.

With icy touch lay cold the beautiful,  
And with delirium drive man's intellect  
In frightful ruin from its lofty throne.  
Extorted groans and falling tears shall mark  
Thy triumphs. Raise victorious thy song  
Above the dead !”

Then turned the Demon King and faced a  
form

Whose cunning glare the fiends with terror  
shook

That round him sat. Chief 'mong the  
throng he seemed

Whose bitter vials on the hearts of men  
Should yet be poured. A gilded cup he  
held

With pleasure decked, and brimmed with  
happiness.

Within the chalice fair empurpled flashed  
Like molten rubies kissed by noontide sun  
A crimson stimulus. “Nectar” was graved  
Upon its burnished front ; but hid beneath  
Its sparkling surface lurked poison most  
dread,

And coiled within a latent adder lay  
Whose bite was mortal and whose sting was  
death.

Before the chief this death-clad being stood  
While thus addressed :

“ Prime minister of Woe ! to thee  
 Shall unborn millions yet their homage pay.  
 ’Tis thine to populate these halls of gloom  
 With souls created in a godlike mold ;  
 ’Tis thine to throng this flaming tide with  
     barks  
 Dismantled in the storm that yet shall sweep  
 O’er Time’s dark sea with wreck and ruin  
     strewn.  
 Go forth, great conqueror, nor hither come,  
 ’Till wrapped in fire the sky shall, like a  
     scroll,  
 Be lit with flame : then come the victor-  
     chief  
 Of slaughtered souls.”

                                    Then backward swung  
 The gates of Hades, and in multitude  
 The evil angels who should, hand in hand,  
 Seduce from paths of virtue free-born souls,  
 Went forth to earth on errands dread with  
     fate.  
 Through weary days on light’ning wing they  
     sped  
 To that fair world whose peopled marts  
     and streams  
 Of moving life afar were seen by all.  
 When on the silvery confines of that orb  
 I saw them doff their panoply of Death



And rob their hideous forms in lustrous white.  
Invisibly they joined the ranks of men.  
And while I mused in wond'ring thought  
absorbed

A song seraphic burst upon mine ear  
In melody akin to angel choirs.  
To thee who readest I shall sing the lines  
From Heaven addressed; but as the diamond  
dew,  
Fair gem of morn, dissolves 'neath human  
touch,

So songs seraphic lose celestial charms  
When sung by mortal lips :

“ The demon band whose flight  
From worlds of deepest night  
To this of joy and light  
Thine eye could see,  
On mission dark have come  
To spread the pall of gloom  
Above man's earthly home  
Their work shall be.

The garments thrown aside  
In sin's dark font were dyed ;  
Such robes could never hide  
A child of wrath.  
But draped in loveliest hue  
Entrancing human view,  
Souls bought with blood they'll woo  
From virtue's path.

But, 'mid the legion throng  
That shall with syren song  
Lure souls in virtue strong  
    To Ruin's tide,  
One, crowned with fairy light,  
Shall bear in mortal sight  
A cup whose contents bright  
    Foul poisons hide.

That cup shall overflow  
With bitterness and woe ;  
Who drink shall only know  
    Life's starless night.  
Beneath its magic power,  
As falls the blighted flower,  
Shall fall great minds that tower  
    In alpine height.

The scepter shall depart  
From him whose ravished heart  
Shall clasp this cup and part  
    With holy peace.

Great kings its golden brim  
Shall press, till faint and dim  
Their glory dies : life's hymn  
    Forever cease.

Its gleaming front shall blaze  
'Neath marble domes that raise  
Their tops toward heaven, whose praise  
    All lands proclaim.

Where costly fountains play  
And toss their showers of spray  
On queenly forms—there, gay  
    The cup shall flame.

Where gorgeous pictures glow,  
And wealth its dazzling show  
Of grandeur makes, shall flow  
    Its crimsoned light.

Where forms of heavenly grace  
With radiant eye and face  
Shall join in life's young race  
    It dances bright.

Where list'ning crowds admire  
True intellectual fire  
Which kindled rises higher  
    'Till juries quake ;  
Where youthful talents shine,  
And states to praise incline,  
Lo, there the flashing wine  
    Its conquests make.

Where stands the reverend one  
Ordained of God's own Son  
To warn the lost to shun  
    The broader road.

Where he, with burning zeal,  
Doth for his God appeal,  
E'en there this fiend his seal  
    Shall fix in blood.

Where want, disease, and pain,  
With poverty have reign,  
The cup its ruby stain  
    Will hold to view :  
And savage, saint, and sage,  
Youth, manhood, hoary age,  
And all on life's vast stage  
    Its power shall rue.

O, man! go forth—attend,  
The footsteps of this fiend;  
Thy tempted race befriend,  
    And warnings write.  
With garments none can see  
Thy form shall vested be,  
Farewell—peace be with thee!  
    Adieu! good-night.”

The voice which sweetly sang was hardly  
    hushed  
When on the air, upborne by power unseen,  
I rode. The moon with footsteps soft went  
    up  
The spangled firmament—now hid behind  
A cloud of fleecy form—and now aglow  
With full-orbed face. And burning stars  
    of gold  
Were thickly strewn upon the vault of night.  
Unseen I watched the fiend who bore the  
    cup  
To do its work of ruin 'mong the young  
And old, the rich and poor, the bond and  
    free,  
Till on the demon's neck the ponderous foot  
Of UNIVERSAL PROHIBITION rests.

## CANTO II.

Winter lay on the fields.  
The bare old forest trees were bent with  
    freight  
Of silvery gems, and snowy storms made  
    white  
The virgin breast of earth, and merry bells  
Their music poured as through the chilly air,  
The gay and beautiful, with muffled forms  
And blushing cheeks, on wintry pleasure  
    sped.

I saw a mansion brown, whose costly front  
And royal elegance the praise secured  
Of those who named its owner as they passed.  
Within its massive walls, in chamber bright  
Where ease reposed, a jeweled lady sang  
With pensive melody her cradle song.  
Around her neck a chain of purest gold  
Hung carelessly, and in her tresses dark  
With pearls entwined, shone gems of daz-  
    zling hue,  
As shine the stars in evening's coronal.  
And oft her brilliant eye fell, with a glance  
Of love maternal and of tender thought,  
On a fair cradled child. His large blue eyes  
In which the throne of innocence seemed  
    built,

Were sealed in sleep by holy angels, who  
Our children guard. The watcher softly  
    rocked

The little couch and kissed the babe whose  
    curls

Of gold fell o'er a brow in symmetry  
Superbly fair, as though, with sculptor skill,  
An angel had a heavenly being carved  
From earthly clay. He seemed more fair  
    because

In orphanage he slept unconscious of  
His loss. For "orphan" is a chilling word  
That thrills with sympathy the strings which  
    long

Have been hushed on the heart's myste-  
    rious lyre.

A father's form slept in its sea-weed shroud  
A dreamless sleep. The giant mount of ice  
Afar in arctic climes, unepitaphed,  
Was his great grave-stone, for afar from  
    home

And wife and tender child his form went  
    down

To wait the final peal and trumpet clang,  
That on the coral vaults of ocean old  
Shall swell, and bid their slumbering legions  
    move

To the august assize. The mother slept

Beneath the willow's shade, her grave  
marked by  
A sculptured shaft and floral urn.

Dark is her dying hour.  
She passes friendless to that spirit land,  
Wherein the meek of earth whose faith is  
pure  
Repose in rest profound. Her parched lips  
None moisten with the cooling draught, nor  
wipe  
The gathering death-beads from her pallid  
brow.  
None catch the radiance of her parting smile  
Or feel the pressure of her chilly hand.  
Alone—alone she dies—pressing her boy  
To Nature's emptied font as life fast ebbs.  
Her waning eye is turned toward him in love,  
E'en as the violet its blighted leaves  
Turns toward the autumn sun. But, see!  
her lips  
With paling tint in holy converse move.  
Her eye, lit with Promethean fire, descries  
A convoy bending o'er her humble couch  
To bear her saintly soul back to its God.  
A victor smile is on her angel face,  
And faith, with triumph plumed, is soaring  
high

To bathe its wings in rapturous atmosphere,  
While far below extends the vale of doubt.  
Her sinking head is pillowed on His breast  
Who cheers His loved ones on through Jordan's stream,

And from her lips touched with celestial fire  
Faint bursts the gladsome song of battle  
gained.

She gives her child in trusting confidence  
To Him whose gaze is on a sparrow's fall,  
While constellations pivot on His will.  
Now o'er her languid eyes the death film  
steals,

And the great pendulum of throbbing life  
Swings lazily. The netted veins of blue  
Are hastening to restore a sacred trust  
To their strange font. Celestial music floats  
From shores with heavenly beings lined.

But, list !

Approaching footsteps break the spell. A  
knock

On the rude door is heard. A lady fair,  
With wond'rous grace and modesty adorned,  
Fain bends above the dying heroine.

Majestic is her brow, while from her eyes  
That sparkle in their sockets dark and deep  
Are flashed the marks of thorough culture  
and



Of strong resolve. Returning homeward  
from

A distant tour, she sought at this drear hut  
An hour's repose. Transparent providence!  
By Him ordained who feeds the hungry  
worm.

The dying saint unfolds her life of want,  
'Then on the child's lips prints the final kiss,  
The last fond token of maternal love.  
To this sent messenger of God she gives  
Her babe to nurse for Heaven: . . . .

Mother, come home.

Consumption's moth has gnawed the web of  
life:

The spoiler tramples on the shattered vase:  
A life of faith is thy memorial:

The golden sheaf the reaper gathers home:  
Life's silver chord is loosed: the soul is  
free:

The golden bowl is broke: the gem re-  
stored:

The shattered pitcher crumbles at the font:  
The wheel of life stands still and death is here.  
The prattling child has won, like Miriam's  
charge,

A home of splendor and a heart of love;  
And on a stranger's ear shall sweetly fall  
His earliest lispings of a mother's name.

## CANTO III.

How hurriedly the passing years have gone!  
Like night stars darting down a moonlit sky,  
Or silvery waves at play on summer streams,  
Timesweeps along. Life dreams itself away.  
But yesterday in memory's calendar  
Eugene Van Allen was a man mature.  
Yet two-score years have gone the past to  
join.

The rose, by Nature painted on his cheek,  
Blushes with deeper shade, as though some  
power  
Were struggling to supplant her mighty  
work.

His form bespeaks a manly elegance,  
And on his brow the seal of dignity  
Has been impressed. His trembling lip—  
his cheek

Reflecting back the wine-cup's scarlet ray—  
His vision dimmed, and reeling step—these  
loud

Proclaim sad intercourse with the drink-  
fiend.

Amid the luxury  
Of that fair home, where Providence his lot  
In childhood cast, an idol Ralph became.  
To minister to childhood's faintest wish

Love strained its powers, and wealth its  
treasure bright

Into his lap poured out. The mother taught  
Her charge in life's young morn to lisp  
God's name

In reverential prayer and pious song.

To nourish this fair bud—to see it bloom—

To water it with tender, holy love—

To give it as a fragrant sacrifice

To Christ—she spent the oil in life's bright  
lamp.

Ere yet the summer roses gayly bloomed

Five seasons, Death, the princely halls be-  
spoiled,

And from the pedestal of social worth

The image fell. Her spirit passed from earth

To Heaven's bright courts as sinks in crim-  
son pomp

The dying sun. Her partner bowed beneath

The heavy stroke as the imperial oak

By tempest pressed ; and when the deathless  
spark

Rose o'er the ruined clay, as "Phoenix" from

Its funeral urn, his manly pride gave way,

And tears fell on the alabaster cheek

Of her whose love had been Eugene's chief  
pride.

Repentant prayers ascended from his lips,

And sacred vows he made to Christ his  
Judge,  
But ere the wild grass perished 'neath the  
sweep  
Of winter's storms, his covenant he forgot,  
And like dead leaves they withered lay upon  
The soul.

Vows in the crisés of soul-suffering given,  
Fade like a flower.  
When mirth returns from the mind they are  
driven.  
'Mid cares of the world such covenants riven  
Die with the hour.

Vows 'mid the billows of affliction born  
Too often cloy.  
Remorse is not repentance, and forlorn  
The soul may lie, yet distant be the morn  
Of holy joy.

Vows made when dying lips our own do  
press  
Are soon forgot.  
Moved by emotion man his God may bless,  
Then sin in life. True sorrow his address  
To Heaven sends not.

Vows formed in youth's first hours, when  
sunbeams gild  
The spirit home,  
Send incense pure to Heaven's fair hills, well  
filled  
With sweet perfume. On such a soul may  
build  
A life to come.

His grief he sought to drown  
In alcohol, and 'neath its gloomy power  
His sorrows hide. His flushed decanters  
flamed  
When at the board with plenty crowned he  
sat  
Beside his charge, passing the years of  
youth.  
He grasped the glass at midnight's quiet  
hour  
And, reeling, kissed his only child, who  
slept  
In calm repose. By the dim light within  
The socket flickering he gazed upon  
The portrait of the dead, whose look serene  
In watchful love seemed fixed on his dull  
eyes ;  
Then to the bowl for sad relief he fled  
As the lone leper hastes to desert streams

His burning thirst to quench. The fiend  
was there  
Awaiting with infernal smile the hour  
When o'er the ruined soul and mental wreck  
His dismal banner should in triumph wave.

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## CANTO IV.

Night and the study lamp!  
Dark drapery has fallen on the walls  
Of the old college pile. In a small room  
A weary student delves, while Nature claims  
Her needed rest. Gone is the noon of night,  
And on the dial's face the moving hand  
Tells of approaching day; but Ralph  
writes on.  
Four years the thorny path to Learning's font  
His weary feet have trod. The classic page  
And tome of musty lore have cheered his  
hours,  
While sheaves of knowledge have, by toil  
severe,  
Been stored in the vast granary of mind.  
To-morrow, cheered by beauty's smile, the  
palm  
His hand will grasp: the warrior's sword  
will rest  
In sheath; the weary racer then will reach

The dazzling goal, and 'mid the plaudits of  
Savants and fairer forms, the parting gift  
His *Alma Mater* gives he will receive.

'Tis noon—high noon.

Meridian splendor girds the car of fire,  
And panting Nature lifeless seems and faint.  
In halls where splendor once in state re-  
posed,

A father and his son in manhood's years  
In converse sit. The younger weeping  
pleads

With his loved sire in plaintive tones :  
“Father! forsake the cup ; with thee I plead,  
By thee adopted in mine orphanage,  
And by thy tender love prepared for life.  
When last we met thine eye was full of fire  
And flashed with light that told of mental  
power.

Its flame has paled—to-day it dimly shines  
Gorged at its base with blood. Thy cheek  
was fair,

And o'er it glowed the scarlet blush of  
health ;

But now 'tis bloated sadly, and with hue  
Unnatural is spread. Thy massive brow  
Unwrinkled was by Sorrow's pang ; but now  
Its furrows speak captivity to pain.

Thy strength is weakness now and bent thy  
form.

This home how changed since last its hal-  
lowed halls

I trod in youth ! Gone are its ornaments.  
Its sumptuous elegance has disappeared  
And left these chambers bare, while gifts  
from her

Who filled a mother's place, have one by one  
Departed, sold by thee when most de-  
bauched.

Thy memory, adorned with polished gems,  
Is weaker now than erst—its culture has  
Neglected been. Thy soul by Heaven en-  
dowed

With talents great has to its trust proved  
false.

Father ! give up the bowl, as self-respect  
Its last appeal rings out and calls thee back,  
And starward lift thine eye in deathless  
hope,

And struggle for the prize as strives the soul  
To bribe the reaper Death. For shorn of  
strength

Like Samson, thou hast lain on lap impure  
Thy wearied brow and slept. My father,  
wake !

Ere yet the fatal chain too strong becomes.



As round thy path the deep'ning shadows  
close,

Bring high resolve with purpose ne'er to  
swerve ;

And, as the wounded eagless smites the foe  
That robs her eyrie of her unfledged brood,  
Thine influence lost contest, and with the  
power

That wrecks thine all contend, till free once  
more.

By her whose grave is dearer far to thee  
Than all earth's wealth, renounce thy  
wretchedness.

By thy firm vows dishonored long, retrace  
Thy wayward steps ; the madd'ning bowl  
hurl from

Thy sight afar, and this crush'd heart will then  
For aye be filled with purest joy serene.

For shore strike out as the wrecked seaman  
leaps

The crested wave, and ere the rapids bear  
Thy soul, unpardoned, to its dreadful fate,  
Strike boldly for the shore where rest is  
found."

The father's rugged cheeks were wet again  
With briny tears. Deep sobs burst from  
his lips

Which quivered as the heart beneath them  
 rocked

With inward agony. He drew quite near  
 His manly charge and spoke :

“Too late—too late, my son! ’twere easier  
 far

To give fresh life to a consumptive man  
 In swift decline, than break this fatal spell.  
 The power of *will*, once held with deathless  
 grip,

Is gone : no cable now secures the soul  
 To truth, and strength to practice high resolve  
 Is lost. I helpless lie on the cold wave  
 That moves with rapid sweep the plunge to  
 make,

And like a helpless bark on leeward shore  
 I drift with broken heart to strike the reef  
 Toward which the prow of destiny is turned.  
 Resolve no more its conquests grand achieves  
 And Purpose crumbles ’mid Conception’s  
 plans.

As well might infancy attempt to shake  
 From its fair flesh a tiger’s dreadful clutch,  
 Or threat of man beat back a torrent’s tide,  
 Or human arm enchain the lurid flash,  
 As I to strive with Habit’s dreadful power.  
 Repeated crimes have now confirmed my  
 soul

In wrong. 'Twere vain to combat more  
with fate,  
Or press by useless pleas fresh thorns  
about  
My bleeding heart, for naught avails.  
Alone—

Bereft of hope, I stand the sport of doom:  
Nor taunt my wretched soul with words of  
cheer.

As stands the lonely oak, in tempest wild,  
With barren boughs and green leaves faded  
long,

So now in solitude of mind I live  
And cling to earth by Fate's unkind decree.  
When in Misfortune's grave my form shall  
rest

By my example swear to shun fore'er  
The glass that first shall win the appetite.  
My heated lips, my boy, crave stimulant—  
I go for a brief hour."

An hour passed on.  
Another foll'wing fled, yet came he not.  
In prayer the son had plead with Him who  
thus

Ordained an avenue through which frail man  
May hold communion with the throne of  
grace.

Submissively he asked that his loved sire—

An idler long in life's vast market-place—  
Might throw his callous heart at Mercy's  
feet.

Yet came he not. Then with a step as soft  
As breezes kiss the velvet floor of earth,  
He passed the flight of stairs, and at the door  
Of his sad father's room in silence stood.  
Within all seemed in breathless quietude,  
As hushed as night's last hour. No answer  
came

To his familiar knock. The burnished knob  
He turned with anxious fear and looked  
within,

Then reeled in horror from the sick'ning  
scene.

Upon his couch the father lay in blood.

Beside him was a costly miniature

Of her whose spirit basked in heavenly bliss  
And fadeless joy, and in his grasp was seen  
The glittering steel whose keen and spark-  
ling edge

Had drained life's font. His eye was glazed  
and fixed,

And on his lips a fiendish smile still hung.

His throat was deeply gashed, and clotted  
gore

Had gathered o'er the wound. No pulse  
replied

To love's kind touch. The soul, self-mur-  
dered, stood  
Before its Judge to meet its fearful doom.  
And near him lay a sheet whose ink, scarce  
dry,  
Explained the act most foul.

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## CANTO V.

“We drink Ralph's health.”  
Thus spake a man of wealth, position, pride,  
As the gay throng their sparkling glasses  
drained.  
It was a festive night, and Ralph had won  
The day, and crowned with wreaths of honor,  
now  
His mansion doors threw wide to clamorous  
friends.  
The Legislature called with trumpet voice  
His name, and bade him stand their proxy,  
where  
The eminent their blended tribute give  
Of wisdom, and the Ship of State is manned.  
His boon companions now were gathered  
round,  
And pressed his hand with words of hearty  
cheer.  
His table groaned beneath its luxury.

But 'mid the bounteous plenty given of  
Heaven,  
Rare wines and brandies flashed—Hell's  
liquid fire,  
To scorch damnation on th' immortal mind,  
And slow consume the happiness of man.  
His conscience battled long with Fashion's  
power,  
But conquered fell. The Bacchanalian feast  
Must gladdened be by varied drinks to cheer  
The revel hour. For Custom clamor made  
And Etiquette its sword unsheathed and  
plunged  
Deep in the soul's sweet consciousness of  
right.  
This polished blade a guard for innocence  
And not for crime was edged. Contested  
long  
The combat was, till Conscience bowed  
herself  
At Fashion's shrine and worshiped gods  
impure.  
The sand-grain shines with diamond light,  
when on  
Its form minute the sunbeam throws its  
smile,  
While the uncrystalline surrounding earth  
Reflects no ray—so Conscience, smiled upon

By knowledge of transgression, flames with  
light  
Amid the dull and rayless ruins of  
A soul whose pristine purity has fled.

“ We drink Ralph’s health,”  
Went round the crowd, whose cheeks the  
bestial blush  
Still bore of wild debauch. For almost lost  
Were they to virtue; dead to sympathy  
With truth. The fiend’s true friends, they  
fought beneath  
His flag, and sought to slay the innocent.  
And Ralph, when honored by their com-  
pliments,  
Quaffed oft the poisonous tide, till now  
forsworn,  
And took along the drunkard’s dreary  
path  
The first and dangerous step. Oft warned,  
and well,  
He spurned advice, and counsel sacred  
waived.  
He drained the glass, and as a mother screams  
When high in air a condor bears her child  
To its dread sea-girt crag, so Conscience  
raised  
Her voice in protest loud, as for despair

The birthright of the soul was bartered, and  
Its purity fell slain.

'Tis night's lone hour, and 'mid her path  
of stars

The climbing moon illumes the fleecy bars  
Of formless cloud: earth's weary millions  
sleep

While watching angels their bright vigils  
keep.

In yon dark house, repulsive by design,  
Fair goblets golden and of silver shine;  
And seas of light from costly lamps poured  
down

Enrich the pictured walls of polished stone.  
Along the gay saloon, with soothing power,  
Harp-notes are floating in melodious shower.  
It is a place enchanting; all is bright,  
And gorgeous visions rise to greet the sight.  
In dazzling splendor shine Art's works most  
rare;

With fountain streams that fall in pools  
most fair.

By master pencils touched are paintings  
hung

On gilded walls, and odors have been flung  
On the cool breeze by fair and fragrant  
flowers,



By girlish fingers plucked from summer  
bowers,

Exhaled from crystal vases, whose perfume  
Falls like the breath of Spring on virtue's  
tomb.

Prepared by skillful hands with dainty care  
Are viands rich, well served in costly ware,  
And girls with graceful step adorn the board  
With regal taste, while sparkling wines are  
poured

In flaming cups, and all that can delight  
The sense, and win the eye, are here to-night.  
This is a gambler's "Hell," and thronged  
the room

With men who dream not of the night's  
dread doom.

The aged sire is here, whose ringlets gray  
Admonish him to close life's misspent day  
With great reform; but now he gayly smiles,  
And life's last years in sinful sport beguiles.  
As midnight's hours approach does he forget  
His bartered home, where once his children  
met

His bounding step, and where his wife is  
laid

At rest beneath the cypress' mournful shade?  
And in the chambers of his crime-blackened  
heart

Are there no holy memories? Apart  
Is there no shrinking from the fatal wave  
That onward moves?—no prayer to God to  
save?

Have severed ties no talismanic power?  
Comes there no fear of wrath's consuming  
shower?

Are the sweet names of mother, sister, wife,  
Erased from the bright album leaves of life?  
And when the old yearn to depart from  
earth,

Does he not scorn the gambler's board and  
mirth?

The merchant here is struggling to redeem  
By faro luck his squandered wealth. A  
gleam

Of joyish hope his wild eye lights—his blood  
Is hot—he loses! Grief's tumultuous flood  
Breaks o'er his soul. He, frenzied, stakes  
yet more.

'Tis gone: he soon will fly to foreign shore  
To pine in friendless exile, and shed tears  
Afar from all he loved in earlier years.

I see the judge, whose shoulders daily wear  
The ermine pure. His reputation fair  
He soils by strengthening vice and breaking  
laws

O'er which in crowded courts he daily pores.

With criminals whom but to-day, for gain,  
He helped to 'scape their crime's recoiling  
    pain

He breaks the pack: by wrong his victim's  
    card

He covers, wins—a judge in crime grown  
    hard.

The statesman learned is here, who, but  
    to-day

The list'ning throng enchained, and bore  
    away

By eloquence impassioned his great peers,  
And won by patriot pleas the people's  
    tears.

He plays—puts down the card and shining  
    gold.

The game is lost: the fiend in crime grown  
    old

With boisterous taunt and laugh, and 'riched  
    by fraud,

His ill-gain gathers up and leaves the board,  
While the crushed victim of his hellish  
    art,

With eye by passion flamed and stricken  
    heart,

In anguish hies him through the midnight  
    gloom,

A beggared gambler, to his lonely home.

At yonder table, on which golden heaps  
Are piled, sits Ralph. His eagle gaze he  
keeps  
On the shrewd wretch who seeks by subtle  
trick  
His victim to entrap; but he too quick  
Discerns the bait, and shuns the well-laid  
snare,  
And turns the tables planned with master  
care.  
A moment they the well-played game sus-  
pend  
And drink the ruby punch; again they  
bend  
Above the fatal cards and shining dust,  
In fashion's robbery of God accursed.  
A gambler's Hell and Ralph! He, too, has  
turned  
To that rash course he swore to shun, while  
spurned  
Enfeebled Conscience lies. The moral sense  
Once keen, is dulled, and no pure penitence  
Pervades his soul. Forgot and falsely kept  
Have been his covenants, and he who wept  
Love's scalding tears o'er one he fain would  
save  
From mental ruin and a drunkard's grave,  
Is treading in the foot-prints of his sire,

And drinks, by copious draughts, damnation's fire.

The sport of mocking fiends he naked stands,  
Of shame and wisdom destitute. His hands  
Outstretched, invite the tempter to destroy  
His noble nature and his priceless joy.

"This once—this once," he thought when  
first the bowl

He touched: the magic liquor sipped, his  
soul

But craved another glass. "And but once  
more"

He said, and drank again: the happy shore  
Of innocence his life bark left: the sail  
Was wide unfurled to battle with the gale:  
To quiver 'neath the storm-king's dreadful  
frown:

To fight the gale on ruin's sea: go down  
Amid the whirlpool's rage where Death  
careers,

And Mercy's heaven launched life-boat  
never steers.

The game exciting grows: the long, long  
night

Has thus been spent, and now with passion's  
light

His wild eye flames. The city clock strikes  
four,

And all who trod the gambler's velvet floor  
Have gone. His all is staked upon the  
game :

He wins. The maddened gambler calls the  
name

Of God in anger, and debauched, once more  
The cup is drained, and the secreted door  
Behind Ralph springs. To his lone, silent  
room

His footsteps bend through night's dis-  
persing gloom.

With kindled appetite, all night the bowl  
Has pressed his lip and charmed his ruined  
soul.

Its pristine innocence long since has fled,  
And youth's fair vows are numbered with  
the dead.

His is a drunkard's life, though yet he calls  
His country's ear amid the gorgeous halls  
His presence soils; where patriot spirits  
tower,

And freedom's arm is clothed with might  
and power.

A slave may be a moral hero, while  
A senator may be a slave to guile.

## CANTO VI.

'Tis Winter's carnival.

Cold winds career in fury 'long the streets,  
And in the swaying pines make nightly  
moan.

From every bough the glistening ice-gems  
hang,

And the white snow appears a mirror 'neath  
The sun's pale rays. The pauper child in  
rags

Ascends the marble steps, relates its tale  
Of suffering long endured, and begs a crust.  
The wealth-clad throng are housed from  
frigid air,

Forgetful of the countless, famished poor  
In bleak winds shivering.

Around a hearth

Whose crackling flames laugh at the frosty  
air,

And kiss away the fringe-work on the pane,  
A boisterous trio midday revels keep.

The room has hallowed been in memory,  
And from the same a saintly spirit rose  
To wear her crown, while on the painted wall  
Dim stains of blood tell where the suicide  
His spirit tossed, uncalled, in Mercy's face.  
The plate of blue and gold, once sacred ware,

Is garnished now with viands delicate,  
And cups that pressed pure lips, in death  
    long sealed,  
Have smoked to-day and thrown their fra-  
    grance rich  
Around. They celebrate with joke and wine  
And Bacchanalian song a festal day.  
The banquet o'er, each brims his glittering  
    glass  
And lifts to lips profane a toast's response.

On yonder damask chair reclines in ease  
A man in prime of life, whose sparkling eyes  
Expressive are of mind capacious, strong,  
And cultured; while his polished port be-  
    speaks  
Communion with refinement perished now:  
A brilliant senator, and yet a tomb  
Where virtue, buried, lies. With princely  
    power  
He reigned in social life, until his bark  
Dashed on the fatal reef a hopeless wreck.  
More rapidly he raced to ruin's brink  
Than down the plane inclined the swift ball  
    leaps.  
A libertine! his intercourse is shunned.  
Debauched, the beautiful his presence fly.  
In the deep grave of public scorn he lies,



No resurrection morn to know in time.  
The merry crowd demand of him a song,  
And in his honor each the well-filled glass  
Exhausts. His revel words the drunkard sings  
In cadence tremulous :

Lift up the red wine—lift it high:  
It blushes bright as a sunset sky.  
Its crimson drops like rubies shine:  
Lift up the cup—lift up the wine.  
Lift ye the red wine high.

Fill ye the silver bumpers up:  
A priceless boon is a well-filled cup.  
Rally around the mantling bowl:  
Drink to the health of a noble soul.  
Fill ye the bumpers up.

Sing as ye press its blazing brim:  
Lift up your merry festive hymn.  
Sing to the loved from our circle torn:  
Memory wails the friends now gone.  
Sing as ye press its brim.

The badge of friendship we will wear,  
And o'er the wine-cup fondly swear  
To kneel at Bacchus' shrine. Then sing  
Our social song, and let it ring  
The pledge of friendship strong.

He ceased his song.

A listener to its words erratical  
Is Ralph, a drunkard gray. Such scenes to  
him

Familiar are, and on the soul's dark page  
Is writ the history of wasted years.  
The sun of fortune on the life of shade  
Has thrown its gilding rays but transiently.  
The flying years have prostituted been  
To drunkenness and mirth, and gatherings  
where

The wine-god holds foul court. His vacant  
eye

Bedimmed and dreamy gives its evidence  
Against his claim to purity. The laws  
Of nature oft transgressed retribute now  
Their penalties, like asps, to sting fore'er  
His happiness. He lives a monument  
Of warning, epitaphed by countenance  
Most wan ; and Cain-like brands of infamy  
Scorched on his brow, proclaim that Nature  
now

No longer owns her offspring, labeled o'er  
With stamps of deep disgrace. Licentious  
mirth

His loosened joints have shook with tremors  
dread,

And when to his pale lips the cup is raised  
His trembling hand the flashing purple  
wastes.

As the fair face of woman beautiful  
Its loveliness surrenders when upon

It sits the pestilence, so his has lost  
All trace of manly worth and lofty thought,  
And like to ruins of some structure grand  
Whose glory perished when its pillars fell,  
His mind that once in massive strength had  
towered

Has parted with its pristine majesty.  
Like pilgrim lone who stands upon the shore  
Of some wide stream, and waits the coming  
bark

To bear him o'er—Ralph stands with bended  
ear

And quivering heart, on Death's chill Styx  
and waits

The dismal boat whose keel the dark waves  
cuts.

In turn they ask the wretched, haggard man  
An offering of song, or tale, or dream  
To give; whereon he ghastly smiled and said:

“I dreamed last night.

Methought the curls of boyhood's sunny  
morn

Played round my forehead fair. I stood upon  
The stage of action free,—whereon each  
steps

While float youth's golden hours, with  
chisel sharp

To carve high fortune from the rugged block  
Of destiny. I saw the paths of life  
Diverge,—one pressed by those in lovelier  
climes,

And one o'er which the spirits lost have trod.  
The one was strangely narrow, rough, and  
drear.

No rainbow arched its way, nor clusters hung  
Along its vales. Around me crowds of men  
Were hastening on, and few turned in to  
tread

The narrow way. With dusty sandals shod  
Came weary pilgrims oft in white robes clad,  
And 'mid the taunts and jeers of the gay  
throng

Rich-robed in wealth's habiliments, passed in.  
On arch above its gates was graved in words  
Of time-worn age—'The only path to  
Heaven.'

The other way was wide, and on the cheek  
Fell breezes in perfume unearthly steeped.  
The rose its crimson breast exposed to view,  
And the pale lily—type of purity:  
The jessamine climbed high and tossed its  
breath

Toward heaven. The blue-tinged violet  
thick flung

Its scented treasures on the ambient air,  
And birds, whose plumage was with down  
of gold  
Besprinkled, caroled forth their happy  
songs.

On harps whose strings were silver fairies  
played,  
And clustering pleasures hung from bowers  
of bliss.

An arch of pearl the bright gates spanned,  
from which,  
In jeweled letters, flamed the blazing  
words—

‘The path of pleasure ; whoso enters here  
Finds bliss ; this path connects with that  
which leads

To Heaven, but shuns its thorns.’

Methought I sauntered in,  
Aware that danger lurked in this bright  
road.

The rugged way I knew led on to God,  
Though dark and rough. This flower-strewn  
road methought

Lured by deceptive lights the soul to death,  
Yet it I freely chose. Choice strangely mad,  
For man endowed with judgment to decide,  
And will to execute her verdicts true.

I entered with intention to return,

Resolved to tread but to a dazzling joy  
 That, like a golden apple hung afar.  
 I fain would pluck this distant joy and then  
 No blushing flower should lure me further  
     on,

But I would haste to Virtue's rugged road.  
 I wandered on and met, in virgin form,  
 One lovelier than the star which shines alone  
 On stormy skies—as royal queen of night.  
 She held a fragrant cup with crimson filled  
 Whose drops, she said, would chase away  
     each day

All sadness from the mind ; misdeeds inter  
 Beneath the Lethean wave ; create true joys ;  
 Promote the health ; disease and pain ward  
     off ;

Prolong the life which like a shuttle flies,  
 And wreath with bliss its dark, declining  
     years.

By Heaven inspired, an inward monitor  
 Long urged me to reject her wily speech  
 Deceptive, and its solemn warning gave  
 Most tenderly, in words like these :

Trust not the fairy one.  
 She hides 'neath angel robes a demon form :  
 Her burnished cup contains a latent storm :  
     Its bursting terror shun.

With slaughtered souls she gems  
The sea of fire, on which her victims cry:  
Nor touch her chalice fair—its beauty fly  
As Hell's devouring flames.

A syren spirit dark,  
In life's rough sea she builds her rocky  
home:  
Her song enchanting wins to its dread doom  
The soul's immortal bark.

The body, strong and fair,  
Her touch will wreck—its harmony derange,  
Its organs mar—destroy its functions  
strange,  
And naught of beauty spare.

The mind, God's masterpiece,  
Shall 'neath her breath dissolve—its powers  
decay,  
Its noble thoughts and memories fade away;  
Its godlike efforts cease.

God's image well impressed,  
It proudly bears in life's tremendous war.  
Her chalice dims the likeness—it will mar  
The picture He has blessed.

The soul, man's noblest trust,  
'Twill murder; its affections, pure and warm,  
Will fall as withered flowers in Autumn's  
storm:  
Its grandeur lie in dust.

And still this fairy grew more beautiful  
As conscience sought to warp my rising love.  
I gazed enamored on her lovely form  
As if naught else of earth a passing glance  
Deserved. The cup she held magnetic grew.  
I drank, and on my taste the nectar draught  
Fell, as fair dew-drops fall at midnight's hour  
Upon the fading rose bowed low with thirst.  
I heedless ran and gathered joys which  
    blushed  
As gaudy Spring's fair buds. The chalice  
    bright  
In sweetness grew, until all other bliss  
Insipid was.

    Years sped and change came on.  
The tinted fruits whose luscious bosoms once  
Imparted bliss grew tasteless, and their joys  
Impure and dull became. The sun was hid,  
And flowers once fragrant threw a sick'ning  
    smell.

My feet were pierced, and weariness distilled  
Was found within the fairy's chalice red.  
Then yearned I to return, as the lost child  
In wild woods wandering longs for its home.

    "The steps of years retrace and speed  
    thee back."

A voice within exclaimed, while on my ear  
As from afar behind me came, in sad



And plaintive tones, which distance had  
made faint,

The tender call, "Come back, O wanderer."  
I paused, reflected, yearned aback to press  
The trodden path, but, spell-bound, onward  
ran

A distant flower to gain. The joy at first  
Pursued, and set as the returning mark,  
Had hung far back. One more of brilliant  
hue

Ifain would grasp and then return. I gained  
The prize, but found a gilded bauble what  
Reality had seemed. Life was unloved,  
And careless as the candle-fly that sports  
Around the flame, I toyed with wreathing  
fire.

The child of fate, imperiled was my all,  
Yet could I not the moral power command  
To break the fatal chain around me thrown.  
The stubborn will unbending stood, nor  
bowed

Obedience, as judgment well convinced  
Its verdict gave; and as the charger turns  
And courts the flame that leaps in fiery folds  
His manger round, so on I madly dashed  
As hideous visions glared along my way.  
Around me pit-falls yawned, and fearful  
groans

Ascended, as their victims struggled hard  
To gain release from dark despair and woe.  
No star of promise lit the gloom around,  
While Hope, with pinion bright their wild  
cry scorned.

The fairy form, whose beauty once enchained  
My ravished heart, imparted cheer in hours  
Of gloom. Acratus old, encomiast,  
Renowned of wine, sang of the fairer hills  
Far on. Then on my ear the voice once  
heard

Fell yet again. Faint as the echo of  
The lute's last note, it fell, and sweetly  
called,

“Come back, O wanderer.” Afar behind  
The bud last coveted had hung, while in  
The distance dim I could discern the arch  
Spanned by its gorgeous bow. My cloud-  
wrapped path

Was darkening rapidly in densest night,  
And on the sun's bright face huge shadows  
piled

Their inky forms. Enfeebled thunder-peals,  
Portentous, signalized the storm's dread war,  
As 'long the angry sky they muttering  
rolled.

Around me thickly strewn lay blighted  
flowers

That mourned their sweet perfume and  
fragrance lost.

To Fortuna, my guide, I closer pressed.

She clung responsive in embrace as strong  
As clings the vine about the sapless oak.

Again I heard, as faintly as the breath  
Of the wind-harp when kissed by zephyr airs,  
And dying as it fell tone-spent on ear,  
The tender voice. I stopped and quick re-  
solved

The spell to break, and pass the backward  
arch.

Then ghastly forms leaped 'round with  
swords two-edged,

And quick as consciousness a thought con-  
veys,

Or light is born, or ragged flash dissolves,  
Fortuna dropped her angel drapery,  
And stood, a loathsome form of frightful  
mien

And hideous shape. And blackness closed  
around,

While thunders crashed and formless flashes  
fought

In angry strife. The sun fell from his car  
As stately chieftain slain in battle's hour.

I woke and found that fact was masked in  
dreams."

The gray-haired drunkard ceased.  
In visions He who slumbers not had shown  
His record dark, and doom, to snatch the  
brand

Ere yet it was consumed from flames of vice.  
By metaphor the Holy One on high—  
Great Mediator at the court of heaven—  
Had sought his heart ere yet the plunge it  
made

In woe profound. O Love, surpassing  
thought!

That woos the drunkard to his God, nor  
gives

Him o'er to that dread doom he strives to  
grasp,

Until the soul has fled terrestrial scenes.

These midnight visions are the spirit-tones  
Of God, communing with the mind when  
freed

By fancy bright, from its dull clay, in sleep.  
By these mysterious strokes in Night's dark  
noon,

He grappled with the debauchee's doomed  
soul

To win it for the crown the Christos wears.

By dreams in earth's bright childhood He  
unveiled

To Egypt's king the famine dread, and saved  
From Hunger's reign the teeming multitudes,  
And the poor captive-boy of Israel  
The nation's saviour made. In dreams He  
spake  
Alarms to Babylon's proud monarch in  
The hour of banquet revelry, and showed  
His overthrow. Through dreams the infant  
Christ,  
Asleep upon the Virgin's loving breast,  
In flight was borne from the fierce slaughter  
of  
Judea's babes. By dreams full many a star  
Of spirit form, with native light on wane,  
Has, won for the Immanuel's bright crown,  
Blazed forth with holy fire again. When  
sleep  
The body binds—the mind unslumb'ring  
soars  
When Reason dies, and dull Reality  
No pole-star finds. She hears unearthly  
tones:  
Unclouded views of brighter worlds enjoys.  
Who knows that dreams are not God's  
torches given  
To light the wanderer to hills of bliss.  
Each eye the old man held enchained as he,  
The dream significant and big with truth

Discoursed. Each face was bent to comprehend

The vision strange: each mind its comments made,

And Conscience plied her stings on every soul.

And one, like breeze-tossed aspen, shook with fear.

A beardless youth, but yesterday he chose  
The path the dreamer ran; but yesterday  
He stood where vice and virtue part, and with

The power of choice endowed, he, unconstrain'd,

Passed with the throng, who shunned the narrow way

To life's fair crown. His was a gifted mind.  
Debauchery had wrecked his father's fame,  
And on this brilliant son, her only child,  
A mother doted in her widowhood.

His father's place he filled where jurists meet,

And crime is analyzed and law enforced;

Where social order is established firm,

And Justice meets the reckless criminal.

Him we shall follow now, and pause the grief

To share, a mourning mother cast upon

The tomb his vices prematurely built.

## CANTO VII.

The bell-tongue's heavy stroke  
Athwart the tower falls on the ear, and tells  
The hour of night. Along an avenue  
Far-famed for architecture grand, and  
wealth,  
And marble palaces, the happy throng  
Pours on, a living tide. The bright-eyed  
belle,  
Whose inward life is spent in love's fair  
sphere,  
Leans on the arm of him whose image gives  
Her dreams their bliss. Soft music floats  
upon  
The air, from homes where jeweled fingers  
strike  
The tuneful harp. The weary merchant  
smiles  
Unloosed of care, and locked in Friendship's  
arm  
Forgets his ledger and the marts of trade.  
'Tis Recreation's carnival—the hour  
Of mirth and song. The coach, superbly  
rich,  
Glides softly with enchanting freight to  
scenes  
Of splendor gay. The blazing windows flame

With lights afar, while dazzling gas-jets  
blend

In starry lines until their sep'rate forms  
Are lost in paling fire.

Within a "Restaurant"  
That towers 'mid structures crowned with  
art's best skill,  
Whose crowded bar yields gain bought with  
the blood

Of innocence, two sotted forms recline,  
Debauched to that excess that blinds the  
mind

And lays the funeral pall on consciousness.

The bloated features of the elder one  
Familiar are; the younger we have seen  
But once before; since which the drunkard's  
dream

Impressive has from memory's tablet gone.  
Companions boon the *aqua mortis* thus  
They long have quaffed, 'till round th' im-  
mortal soul

Its heaving billows rise to undermine  
The house of clay, and quench the vital spark.

The younger seems a youth, though bloated  
sad.

Possessed of genius rare, he might have  
paved



His path with Fortune's smiles. His cultured  
mind

Could solve enigmas dark, while his rich  
tones,

Freighted with burning words that came  
uncalled,

Could sway the multitudes that thronged to  
hear

His pleas of eloquence ; but bound to Fate  
By Habit's threefold cord, Mazeppa-like  
On Ruin's steed he flies, though every pore  
With soul-blood streams. The stamp im-  
perial

Of manhood yesterday was sealed upon  
His massive brow. The retribution which  
In mystery is oft by Heaven delayed,  
Shall swiftly come to him. The bolt shall  
strike

His spirit as a clap from cloudless skies.  
The purposes divine are veiled, but time  
Unfolds them all, and wisdom shines through  
clouds.

In drunken sleep he sees not that the hand  
Of life's draped dial nears the fatal hour.  
As the pale murderer his heavy chain  
Ere clanks, nor knows the morrow's hidden  
doom,

So dreams he not in deep debauch that at

Life's door the herald stands to summon  
him  
Before his Judge. But ere the son shall fall  
The senator shall cross Death's turbid  
stream.

The months glide on  
And Ralph, the pain-tossed penitent, per-  
ceives  
No strength restored. But, see ! Behold  
he prays ;  
But not for life prolonged. He pleads with  
Him  
For pardon's smile, who for the vilest bled  
When the sun veiled his face o'er Calvary's  
hill.

Disease besieges the frail temple 'till  
It falls in dust ; but ere its pillars reel  
Th' atoning blood his gulty spirit bathes,  
And as the structure crumbles, angels waft  
His sprinkled soul from scenes bestained  
with crime  
To climes unknown by sin. And ere the  
green  
Spring leaves bedecked his grave, the hand  
he clasped  
In wedlock, years gone by, his history traced  
In these sad words :

“ My thoughts go back to a bright summer  
eve.

The burnished moon climbed slowly up the  
sky

And threw her radiant glance upon the lake  
Whose sleeping waters mirrored her fair  
disk.

The landscape clothed in gorgeous velvet  
smiled

Beneath her brilliant beams, and the lone  
crag

As sentinel stood forth in grandeur wild.  
The slumbering world dreamed on, while  
lone and sad

I gazed upon the starry skies hung o'er  
With burning worlds, whose happy legions  
ne'er

Have fall'n by sin. Alone I pondered on  
The past, which o'er the canvas of the mind  
Careered in panoramic vividness.

In Memory's halls my girlhood days arose  
Pregnant with gilded dreams of coming bliss.

I sat with radiant forms in halls of lore,  
And at the font of Learning slaked my thirst.  
My teacher where? More sad than Winter's  
wail

The past's faint spirit-tones responded  
'Gone ;

Gone where the silent dead in sleep profound

Forget life's cares.' Around me clustered those

Whose golden curls were tossed by summer's breeze,

And whose fair cheeks the zephyrs loved to kiss;

But they whose words like gentle music fell;

Who wild-flowers culled along the mossy brook,

Have withered as the buds they bounding plucked,

And sleep beneath the dells they gayly roamed.

I saw a youth, with flashing eye and brow  
Of mental strength come proudly on. His  
step

Was light ; his heart was generous, and kind  
His words. The tide of health careered  
along

His veins, while in colossal majesty

His mind arose. Learned and eloquent

He swayed assemblies large, and jurors  
moved

By his persuasive power. I gave my heart  
A priceless treasure to his cov'nant trust,

And heard my untried guardian record  
His pledge to cherish his young bride—to  
watch

When fever scorched her cheek, and wipe  
with hand

Of tenderness the gath'ring death-sweat  
from

Her brow, should she first pass from earth  
away.

A year sped sweetly on ; no sorrow cast  
Its heavy shadow on my blissful heart ;  
But fringed with promise slept the future  
years.

My child I hushed in sleep with happy songs  
And joy of heart to mothers only known.

'Twas evening's hour of high festivity.  
In mansion grand I moved a guest amid  
A brilliant throng. Wealth, beauty, intel-  
lect,

Had gathered now to wreathe with laurels  
bright

A beauteous bride, and bind love's garlands  
on

Her waxen brow. My husband stood be-  
neath

The flashing lamps, in converse with the  
fair

And beautiful. "Come, Ralph, come drink  
to-night

To her whose presence gives my life its  
bliss,"

Spake he upon whose manly arm reclined  
The lovely one. I saw the pallid hue,  
The fair cheek blanch of him my love  
enshrined,

For he had sworn to handle not the glass  
Which drives the noble mind to madness  
strange;

But, bound by Fashion's chain, oft thrown  
around

The soul to drag it down to its dread doom,  
He yielded, and I saw him raise the wine  
And drain the glass. The fatal appetite  
Which, tiger-like, inflamed, consumes its  
prey,

Was kindled then. Months passed with  
mournful tread.

He came with staggering step and cursed  
the wife

Whose love shone erst the queen-star on  
Life's sky.

No more he kissed his boy, nor cheered my  
heart

With tender tones—a heart in whose dark  
halls

His image stood on Love's bright pedestal.  
An angry frown eclipsed his whilom smile,  
And oaths became the dialect of life.

Rum dragged him on till, with delirium wild,  
He drove me, in an hour of passion's reign,  
From home's bright hearth in want and  
loneliness.

The wintry winds my tresses backward toss'd  
On temples pale. The drifting snow fell fast,  
And bleakness held enchained the storm's  
dark reins.

I knelt upon the virgin earth, while thick  
The freezing tear-drops fell, and raised in  
prayer

My heart to Him whose promise gems His  
word,

'As is thy day, so shall thy strength be  
found.'

"Father! amid the wintry tempest wild,  
In pity look upon my cherished child.  
When o'er my form these drifting snows  
are spread,  
And she who pleads has joined the dream-  
less dead—

Defend my child.

"A wanderer amidst a rayless gloom,  
My broken heart pines for its brighter home.

My Father, all is lost ; earth's hopes are  
dead ;—  
And peace is gone ;—life's happiness has fled,  
I would come home.

“ O, Thou whose power and love no limits  
know,  
Who pitieth fallen man, Thy mercy show ;  
My husband save—lift up his fallen form,  
And though I perish 'mid the furious storm,  
Raise him from woe.

“ I hastened to my cheerless home again,  
Where on his couch he lay in slumber deep.  
A moan of pain fell from his lips, when to  
His side I sprang. He woke and wildly gazed  
About the room, and on the drunkard's wife  
His eye he fixed. I smoothed his burning  
brow,  
Brushed back his uncombed locks of raven  
hue,  
And kissed his bloated cheek. He madly  
gnashed  
His teeth, and launched foul curses at the  
Christ  
Whose mercy long had stayed his vengeful  
ire.  
His lips were white with foam ; he raved,  
and talked



Of serpents, and would, screaming, fling  
them off

Because his reason was a wreck. He breathed  
With effort great; and palsied, his clenched  
hand

Fell on his heaving breast. The shadows of  
Death's vale were closing fast around his  
soul;

And, with affrighted dread, his spirit moved  
To the lone land of starless, moonless night.

The paling splendor of his dying eye  
He threw upon the partner of the past's  
Bright joys. The death film now came  
thickly on:

The pulse responded not to Love's kind  
touch,

And, heaving a faint sigh, my Ralph was  
gone.

“The dark years slowly moved o'er Time's  
great stage.

My idol grew, till on his brow the mark  
Of manhood sat. His father's noble mien  
He proudly bore, while in his eye the same  
Dark splendor shone. Accomplished,  
learned, and true,

He peerless stood, the prisoner's faithful  
friend.

His father's post he filled with honor high,  
And spoke with eloquence, while multitudes  
In tears gave ear. The orphan's cause he  
plead

With moving words in crowded courts, and  
scathed

The wrongs that wrung the widow's heart;  
and on

His banner triumph perched. His name  
was loved,

And blessed his efforts were to stricken ones.

In conscious purity he guileless stood,

A polished shaft of moral excellence.

But genius crumbles 'neath the power of  
Rum,

And intellect is palsied by its touch.

My idol fell. A man of polished mind,

Who thrilled the people's hearts with pa-  
triot tones,

As from their stately capitol he spoke,

Led him with syren words to that mad course

Himself had chose. I urged him long in tears,

With words maternal, not to break a heart

Too often bruis'd. I warn'd him by the past;—

His father's worth and course, and fatal end.

He gave no heed, but trusted his self-pride,—

His firmness in established principle,—

His moral strength, his mastery of will,—

His post of honor, and his envious fame.  
Like sandy pillars pressed too heavily  
These, tottering, fell. His mental brilliance  
waned :

His fame departed and his honor died.  
He reeled oft-times a madman to his home,  
Till on Life's silver cord consumption preyed  
And broke the threads. Disease, the citadel  
Of life long stormed, until Death's banner  
waved

Above the ruined pile. Repentant tears  
Streamed from his eyes. Faith broke the  
chain of doubt

And bathed her wings in the atoning blood,  
And in her beak, as deluge dove, bore back  
God's olive-branch to man. An arm divine  
The soul's dark fetters burst, and freedom  
gave:

Life's lamp burned low, and in the socket  
died.

The spirit winged its flight to higher spheres,  
And Nature's fabric fell in deep disgrace.

“Such memories awoke as night's great orb  
Pursued her silent march 'mid pillared fire.  
Unblessed with sweet repose, this mournful  
ode

I, trembling, penned :

“O, Rum! thou dark monster, how gloomy  
thy reign!  
What tears have been wept o'er thy hec-  
atombs slain!  
What hopes thou hast wrecked—what sad  
trophies won!  
In slaying the father and smiting the son.

“Thou hast entered the mansion and hung  
it with gloom,  
And dug for bright genius a premature  
tomb;  
The learned thou hast conquered, the gifted  
o'erthrown,  
The eloquent stricken, claimed all as thine  
own.

“Homes bright thou hast darkened, and  
'neath thy sad tread  
Our loved ones have fallen, and sleep with  
the dead.  
The husband, the father, the brother, the son,  
Thy cup has destroyed, they have gone  
one by one.

“The victim of sorrow I wander and weep,  
O'er the graves of my idols, who silently  
sleep  
By the Hudson's fair stream, whose billows  
are tossed  
In the dirge-moan it makes o'er the loved  
and the lost.

“O, God of the widow, the orphan’s last  
friend,  
Whose conquering kingdom shall never  
know end!  
Swift speed the glad morn when Rum’s  
reign shall be o’er,  
And the bright bow of virtue shall bind  
shore to shore.

“When the last tear shall fall o’er the spoils  
it has won, [son,  
When the last ’sotted father, the last reeling  
Shall stand ’neath the banner of Temp’rance  
unfurled,  
And the song of the victor shall swell  
through the world.

“When the dark steed of Ruin now tram-  
pling the slain,  
Shall be thrown on his haunches, to hurt  
not again,  
And the bright, crystal waters our Father  
has given,  
Shall have banished strong drink as men  
pass on to heaven.

“Then the cup shall be broken, the dragon  
be chained,  
The bowl be abandoned—the heart no more  
pained;  
And man in his pristine nobility stand,  
With foot on the tempter: on life’s crown  
his hand.”

## CANTO VIII.

The Muse now sings of night and a death scene.

The years have fled along Time's trackless path,

With course as swift as the bright planets move

On the bespangled arch. With rapid step  
They ran their race, nor stopped to parley with

The crowd that hugged the world's false joys, while 'neath

Their wayward feet Time's quicksands disappeared.

In a bleak chamber of a lowly hut,  
Where Poverty unmask its visage stern,  
Is stretched a man who treads the vale of death.

On the black hearth the dying embers gasp  
For life and warmth. The waning lamp emits  
Sepulchral light, while through the broken panes

The cold winds wildly toss the covering spare,

Drawn round the dying form. The friends  
of years

Long fled have left the drunkard to his fate,  
Forgetful of his lavished wealth and love.

Now on a beggar's couch, in penury,  
Unmourned, he dies. Despair flames from  
his eyes

Sunken and dull. His garments soiled and  
torn

Bespeak by texture soft the mournful tale  
Of brighter days. His well-remembered face  
Is sadly changed by time and deep debauch.

The heir of fortune great, he bartered all  
For wretchedness. He madly left the path  
Of purity, and, ravished by the cup

Whose blasting touch destroys, he parted  
with

His early innocence. He who once trod  
In halls of stately splendor, walks, accursed  
Of God, by man disowned, to suffering dread.  
His garnished mind, once the bright cyno-  
sure

Of many hearts, has been besieged and  
stormed

By slow disease, till ruin on it rests.

For deep disgrace and Want's foul fellowship  
His social worth was early sold. His pride  
And dignity of mien fell heavily,

And bore in their sad crash the foliage fair  
Of generous acts and fragrant memories.

The iron hand of Death is on him now  
 With fatal grasp. In vain he strives to bribe  
 The monarch-king with promises of pure  
 Reform. Death offers now no compromise.  
 The bow of mercy on life's sky has died,  
 Its colors quenched by man's mad treachery.  
 The treasury of pain retributive,  
 In nature hid, now throws its fiery stings  
 With fury on the hope-forsaken soul.  
 Remorse around the brow binds piercing  
     thorns,  
 And taunts with demon laugh its agony.  
 The stern command, "Thine house in order  
     set,"  
 Despised when fortune's sun careered on  
     high,  
 Falls on the heart confirmed in disregard  
 Of proffered bliss.

                                    Stern, goading Memory !  
 Thou fount of purest joy and deepest pain,  
 How strong art thou as life's last sands are  
     spent!  
 How dost thou, with thy pinions black,  
     thick set  
 With recollections of remorseful deeds,  
 The past enshade as the affrighted soul  
 Seeks to disguise itself in Virtue's robes,



Its Judge to meet ! How dost thou rise in  
power,

When to the changeless world the spirit  
flies !

Vile acts long since forgot are now recalled  
In bitterness, e'en to the earliest blot  
On life's dark sky. Her telescope of lens  
All-powerful, stern Memory lifts unto  
The eye unsealed, and the great map of life  
Is filled with stains. In review pass life's  
scenes

From the fair star of childhood innocence  
To life's last crime. Remorse her scorpion  
lash

To the departing soul applies, till in  
Its culminating woe it throws its gaze  
On the sad tragedy of closing life.

But list ! He speaks :

“ In this dark hut I die in beggary  
Of foul disease. Would I could once again  
Become a child ; then would I shun the path  
My feet have pressed—the path whose  
ghastly end

With deep remorse of mind I now descry.  
Would that I had her counsels wise obeyed  
On whose fair breast my head was pillowed  
once ;

Whose life of love, perfumed with holy deeds  
And pious prayers, was spent to win her child

To that fair clime of fadeless happiness,  
 Where her pure spirit dwells in deathless joy.  
 Her calm, meek face in Memory's mirror  
 shines,

And on my ear I hear the tender tones  
 That tell of God's unbounded love, and  
 Christ's

Great sacrifice for man, and Heaven's  
 bright stream.

Would that the days of youth were mine  
 again,

Then would I upward mount on strong Re-  
 solve,

And nestle where the star of Virtue shines.  
 The glass, whose bitter dregs of shame and  
 want,

Of penury and pain, I drink in death,  
 Then would I scorn to touch—master of will.

Too late! Hope's peaceful form is confined  
 now.

The rapids have me, and with gathering  
 speed

The billows glide to the dread cataract.

The shining shores of Privilege recede  
 And mists rise dense upon my dying sight.

I leave you, ye who drained my soul of love,  
 And planted round my bleeding brow these  
 thorns

For gold; who for base lucre crucified  
 My hopes; who robbed me of mine inno-  
 cence

And health, with fortune fair and truest  
 friends,

When I from guile afree had wronged you  
not.

I leave you now : Dread thunder-bolts of  
flame

Shall scorch your souls, and burn your an-  
guished gaze,

When ye shall follow me through Death's  
dread vale.

The pangs and tears and blasted hopes ye  
caused

In time, shall in stern retribution come  
On your despairing souls when time is o'er.

At God's dread bar, before the frowning  
Judge

We all shall meet, and ruined men shall stand  
And jeer your pain. Your hopeless victims  
shall

For evermore torment your souls, and plunge  
The dagger keen of fell Remorse into

Your vitals, torn by the avenging blade.

Familiar tones shall haunt your frenzied  
minds,

And while ye cry, 'How long?' Despair  
shall scream,

'Forever,' as successive bolts are hurled.

Th' ascending wail of spirits slain by your  
Foul cup shall, loud as Hell's tumultuous roar,

Forever, unappeased, fall on your ear.

"Farewell, pure hopes and prospects ever  
fair !

Which from your beauteous spheres me  
beckoned on

To fadeless bliss. This arm with fatal stroke  
Your bright fires quenched. Adieu, bright  
world !

Whose walks to me a paradise had been,  
If true to Him who penciled thy fair scenes.  
I long have stained thy sacred soil by crime.  
I leave thee now. Inebriate, I fall  
By the terrific shaft I forged and hurled."

The night-shades wear away ;  
Yet as the weary hours have hurried him  
From earth, no prayer has he addressed to  
Him

Whose bending ear Faith's softest whisper  
hears.

He, stoic like, abandoned now of hope,  
Goes to his fate with iron nerve and soul  
Emotionless. He sinks in Death's cold arms.  
The frigid flood is parting at his feet :  
The shattered hull of Life's immortal bark  
Drinks in the rising waves that press it  
down.

Death tenants now the fallen house of clay.  
The tyrant prince his bankrupt debtor drags  
To dungeons dark, wherein Corruption  
spreads

Its banquet foul. The eye is glazed, the heart,  
Like the spent pendulum, has ceased its  
throbs.

Death stands by the pale form—leans o'er  
the brow,  
A spirit-watcher by the marble clay.

Without a ray of hope to cheer the gloom  
The cherished son of Ralph passed o'er the  
stream.

Death, nurse of dreamless slumbers, laid  
his brow  
In his cold lap to sleep through Time's  
dark night.

When for the final strife the elements  
Their giant powers shall blend, Death too  
shall sleep,

While he, his dull ear pierced by the dread  
trump

That peals along earth's scattered vaults  
and graves,

Shall wake again. He shall come forth to  
meet

The drunkard's doom, the drunkard's  
changeless fate,

When rising high o'er Nature's dying dirge  
The white-robed choirs shall swell their  
triumph song.

So perished by the cup these princely ones,  
The grandsire, father, son—all gifted men.

And ever, by the glass, the wise and good  
And great, like Summer leaves, untimely fall.  
And woman, pure with culture, beauty,  
wealth

Endowed, puts hand upon the crimsoned  
wine

And lifts, like Socrates, a poisoned brim  
And drinks and falls. For gain what mul-  
titudes

The chalice fill with death, and happy homes  
Transform into the awful vestibules

Of hell ! They beggar fathers, and their sons  
They strip of hope and happiness and heaven.  
They crowd the marts with poverty and  
crime ;

With tears and want, with orphans multi-  
plied ;

And troubled ones, in number like the stars  
That glitter on the ebon robe of Night.

Then let us pray and speak and give and  
write

And work and vote until, from sea to sea,  
The white flag waves, and Prohibition reigns  
Law-girt throughout the sisterhood of  
States. \

THE END.













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